

**Amendments to the Claims:**

*This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:*

1. (Original) A switching valve assembly for use in a mixing faucet operable to mix hot water and cold water at a desired temperature and selectively stop and discharge said mixed water, said switching valve assembly comprising:

a manual operation member adapted to be moved in response to a pressing operation by a user;

a push rod member having a base end joined to said manual operation member;

a pilot valve disposed relative to a distal end of said push rod member;

a buffer device interposed between said pilot valve and said distal end of said push rod member;

a diaphragm main valve having a pilot-valve port designed such that said pilot valve is selectively brought into contact therewith and separated therefrom;

a pressure chamber formed on the side of a back surface of said main valve to contain a part of said push rod member, said pilot valve and said buffer device; and

a valve seat designed such that a front surface of said main valve is selectively seated thereon and unseated therefrom.

2. (Original) The switching valve assembly according to claim 1, wherein said buffer device is a coil spring having a spring constant of 0.01 to 2 N/mm.

3. (Original) The switching valve assembly according to claim 1, wherein said buffer device is a coil spring having a spring constant of 0.01 to 0.75 N/mm.

4. (Original) The switching valve assembly according to claim 1, wherein said buffer device is a coil spring having a spring constant of 0.01 to  $P_1 d^2 \pi / (4\delta)$  N/mm, wherein  $\delta$  is the amount of deflection (mm) of said coil spring,  $P_1$  is a water pressure (MPa), and  $d$  is the diameter (mm) of a rod portion of said push rod member.

5. (Currently Amended) The switching valve assembly according to ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, wherein said push rod member is formed to have a smaller diameter than that of said pilot-valve port.

6. (Currently Amended) The switching valve assembly according to ~~any of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, wherein said push rod member is made of stainless steel.

7. (Currently Amended) The switching valve assembly according to ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, which further includes a pilot-valve switching/holding mechanism operable to selectively switch said pilot valve between a water-stop position and a water-discharge position in conjunction with the movement of said manual operation member and hold said pilot valve in either one of said water-stop position and said water-discharge position, said pilot-valve switching/holding mechanism having a heart cam structure.

8. (Currently Amended) The switching valve assembly according to ~~any of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, wherein said mixing faucet comprises a faucet body, a faucet push button for discharging the mixed water directly from a faucet, and a shower push button for discharging the mixed water from a shower, each of said faucet and shower push buttons having a biasing device adapted to press said push button downward when said push button is located in a water-discharge position and above a top surface of said faucet body.

9. (Original) A switching valve assembly comprising:  
a manual operation member adapted to be moved in response to a pressing operation by a user;  
a push rod member having a base end joined to said manual operation member;  
a pilot valve disposed relative to a distal end of said push rod member;  
a buffer device interposed between said pilot valve and said distal end of said push rod member;  
a diaphragm main valve having a pilot-valve port designed such that said pilot valve is selectively brought into contact therewith and separated therefrom;  
a pressure chamber formed on the side of a back surface of said main valve to

contain a part of said push rod member, said pilot valve and said buffer device; and  
a valve seat designed such that a front surface of said main valve is selectively seated thereon and unseated therefrom.

10. (New) The switching valve assembly according to claim 2, wherein said push rod member is made of stainless steel.

11. (New) The switching valve assembly according to claim 2, which further includes a pilot-valve switching/holding mechanism operable to selectively switch said pilot valve between a water-stop position and a water-discharge position in conjunction with the movement of said manual operation member and hold said pilot valve in either one of said water-stop position and said water-discharge position, said pilot-valve switching/holding mechanism having a heart cam structure.

12. (New) The switching valve assembly according to claim 2, wherein said mixing faucet comprises a faucet body, a faucet push button for discharging the mixed water directly from a faucet, and a shower push button for discharging the mixed water from a shower, each of said faucet and shower push buttons having a biasing device adapted to press said push button downward when said push button is located in a water-discharge position and above a top surface of said faucet body.

13. (New) The switching valve assembly according to claim 4, wherein said push rod member is made of stainless steel.

14. (New) The switching valve assembly according to claim 4, which further includes a pilot-valve switching/holding mechanism operable to selectively switch said pilot valve between a water-stop position and a water-discharge position in conjunction with the movement of said manual operation member and hold said pilot valve in either one of said water-stop position and said water-discharge position, said pilot-valve switching/holding mechanism having a heart cam structure.

15. (New) The switching valve assembly according to claim 4, wherein said mixing faucet comprises a faucet body, a faucet push button for discharging the mixed water directly from a faucet, and a shower push button for discharging the mixed water from a shower, each of said faucet and shower push buttons having a biasing device adapted to press said push button downward when said push button is located in a water-discharge position and above a top surface of said faucet body.

16. (New) The switching valve assembly according to claim 5, which further includes a pilot-valve switching/holding mechanism operable to selectively switch said pilot valve between a water-stop position and a water-discharge position in conjunction with the movement of said manual operation member and hold said pilot valve in either one of said water-stop position and said water-discharge position, said pilot-valve switching/holding mechanism having a heart cam structure.

17. (New) The switching valve assembly according to claim 5, wherein said mixing faucet comprises a faucet body, a faucet push button for discharging the mixed water directly from a faucet, and a shower push button for discharging the mixed water from a shower, each of said faucet and shower push buttons having a biasing device adapted to press said push button downward when said push button is located in a water-discharge position and above a top surface of said faucet body.

18. (New) The switching valve assembly according to claim 7, wherein said mixing faucet comprises a faucet body, a faucet push button for discharging the mixed water directly from a faucet, and a shower push button for discharging the mixed water from a shower, each of said faucet and shower push buttons having a biasing device adapted to press said push button downward when said push button is located in a water-discharge position and above a top surface of said faucet body.